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ABSTRACT

The way in which Hispanic-American women adapt and cope with the organizational conditions within California colleges was studied. The 30 respondents (8 in the professorial ranks and 22 in the support services) were administered a questionnaire to determine their position, training and experience, and the respondents' views on the position and advancement potential. The few Hispanic-American women in academic positions tended to be in Chicano Studies, foreign languages, sociology, and education departments at lecturer and assistant professor ranks. The Hispanic-American women were permitted to participate in academia without strict bureaucratic constraints. However, since the bureaucratic characteristics serve as socializing and integrating agents, these women participate on the periphery without real impact on the organization and without undergoing personal changes. Two groups of support services women were typical. Clerical workers who advanced with their male supervisors holding professonial positions tended to find satisfaction in their work experiences. Younger women with a keen ethnic identity and desire for advancement in administrative positions were also employed in the support services. (SW)

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RESTRAINING AND LIBERATING PERCEPTIONS REGARDING MINORITY WOMEN'S INSTITUTIONAL PARTICIPATION

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Restraining and Liberating Perceptions Regarding Minority Women's Institutional Participation

University organizations are structured into two major branches, the academic and the support services. The academic ranks consist of professors, academic chairs, deans, vice-chancellors or vice-presidents and chancellors, presidents or provosts. The support services consist of a variety of services such as health, food, maintenance, clerical, student services, and many others. The organization is bureaucratic with the chancellors or presidents or provosts as heads over the rest. The bureaucratic characteristics are more pronounced among the support services than among the academic ranks. Each branch, however, has a specified number of levels which can be attained sequentially. Normally, the academic branch is the preferred one.

This organization can also be said to be structured according to the composition of each of its branches and levels within. The most obvious division is between men and women. A greater number of men are located in the academic branches with corresponding lower numbers of women as the levels advance from academic lecturers to presidents. Except for those institutions that are women's colleges, women are greatly outnumbered by men in the academic branch.

Men are found in smaller proportions in the support services. Correspondingly, those women who work for the university are generally located in the support services branch. Women occupy the clerical and low level management posts. For example, a women's center director is likely to be a woman. Men occupy the management and administrative offices. Recently, men have been occupying those posts which require some technical knowledge such as computer and media equipment. Therefore, men administer food, housing, ground maintenance, health, library, computer centers, registration and student advisement programs. They also manage the personnel connected with each of these programs. The few women who obtain administrative posts in the support services tend to be in programs such as women's centers, affirmative action, and ethnic student recruitment programs.

Hispanic women tend to be confined to Hispanic student recruitment programs, to other support services connected with Hispanics such as clerical workers for the Chicano Studies program. Hispanic women are not likely to be found in the academic ranks. There are very few professors and fewer academic administrators.

What is revealed, then, is a bureaucratic organization consisting mostly of males, with women more heavily concentrated in the support services with a few Hispanic-American women in these services. How do these women fare in this type of an institution? This paper attempts to show how Hispanic-American women adapt and cope with the organizational conditions as they fashion a working role within it.

Methodology

Data were collected for this study through a survey questionnaire. The

survey sought to determine the position occupied, the training and experience brought to the position by the person and the characteristics the respondent saw as important for the position and for advancement. Within these latter two parts of the survey the respondents were asked to describe the organizational forces which they saw as aiding them and those forces which they perceived as hindering them either in holding their present positions or in advancing. Many respondents felt their positions were insecure.

The survey was administered to 30 Hispanic American women employed in California academic institutions. Eight of the 30 Hispanic -American women were in the professorial ranks. The rest were in the support services. These women were located by the use of directories and nomination by each other.

The most severe limitations of this report are: 1) subjects were difficult to locate, 2) those subjects holding positions are greatly outnumbered by others, and 3) Hispanic-American women don't hold the important institutional positions. Therefore, this study reports on perceptions held by "token" members of the organizations, and by those who don't presently hold the "better" institutional positions, and the propects for their advancement are limited.

Theoretical Framework

Organizations are generally viewed as bureaucratic with clear lines of authority, specialization, impersonalization, a tradition of rules, regulations and procedures, and a point of leadership. Within academia, the structure consisting of two major branches, the academic ranks and the support services, tends to modify the above mentioned characteristics in very important ways.

First, the academic ranks are hierarchically structured from the lowly lecturer to the untenured assistant professor, to the tenured associate and

full professors, to the chairs, deans, vice-chancellors or vice-presidents to the chancellors, presidents or provosts. Moreover, this hierarchy is further broken into the professorial and the administrative ranks. Each rank is hierarchically structured as well. This structure is further fragmented into schools, colleges, departments, programs and discipline areas. Again, this structure is hierarchically structured according to the primacy granted to any particular unit. For example, the College of Natural Sciences may be the most prestigious on a particular campus. That unit will, therefore, be ranked above all others. The importance of this ranking is that the administrators and professors of that unit will exercise more authority and power over the rest by virtue of their unit's hierarchical placement.

Within this general structure men and women are differentially placed as well. Men tend to be in those units at the top of the hierarchy while the women are in the rest. Minority women are likewise placed in those units at the bottom of the hierarchy.

The structural addition of a Chicano Studies Program, for example, with professors and chair is an important modification to the institution. The change necessitates admitting Hispanic-Americans as professors of Chicano Studies located in the respective unit. It may or may not necessitate integration of the person into the overall structure. The juncture for this integration is at the point of the acquisition of tenure.

The branch of special services is also hierarchically structured from the lowliest in each of the services such as file clerk in the clerical services to the middle managers on to the managers or directors at the top. Each unit is likewise hierarchically structured so that careers can be charted

within each unit and possibly across units. This branch is normally so independent of the academic branch that they seldom meet together and seldom share concerns. Also, this branch is not likely to interfere with the academic branch in the areas of instruction, curriculum and student evaluation. This branch is also likely to consist of a greater number of women than does the academic branch. It is also likely to have those women placed in those positions with less autonomy, skill requirement, and authority. It is within this branch that special units such as affirmative action, minority recruitment, learning and study centers and other programs are instituted. Hispanic-American women are likely to be found in these units. Their major function is to deal with the Hispanic-American students.

The bureaucratic characteristics are, therefore, present within the institutions in varying degrees across units. Likewise, organizational participants are placed in those units with the corresponding characteristics. For example, white males are placed in the academic ranks assuming the leadership positions while Hispanic-American women are placed in the support services where they deal with the Hispanic-American student.

Analysis

Academic Ranks

Hispanic-American women are not likely to be found in academic positions. Those positions they occupy are likely to be Chicano Studies, foreign languages, sociology, and education. They are also more likely to be occupying the lecturer and assistant professor posts. In the present sample of eight, two were tenured associate professors. None had attained the full professorship. Also, these women tend to be the only Hispanic-American women professors in

the particular campus. In the present study, all of the Hispanic-American women professors are the lone one on their campuses. One reported that during the previous year, there had been two of them, but one had left to another campus.

These women are located in the lowliest of the organizational offices. They are also placed in positions not readily visible, however, their personal visibility is great. All of these women report being recognized and greeted by name by the campus' top administrators. This fact should benefit the persons in certain ways. But, conversely, there are are penalties for the high personal visibility and low organizational influence. It is this dimension that is the most telling in the effects of bureaucracy on the socialization of Hispanic-American women in academia.

The concept bureaucracy normally conjures the prominance of organizational identification and institutional loyalty and commitment. There is also an assumption that recruits are meant to develop this organizational role. The impersonalization and competency are to be emphasized. But this is not true for Hispanic-American women. These women are normally recruited because of their personal attributes. The institution is pressured to accept them without any preparation for their organizational integration. In fact, they are accepted in those units which are not critical to the organization and which do not require the degree of participants' loyalty and commitment to the organization which other units do. There is an appearance that the institution does not intend to integrate them.

The neglect to foster and nourish strong socialization processes for these women, means that they are <u>liberated</u> from the normal bureaucratic

requirements. This liberation takes place by permitting these women to remain in a rather structureless environment. For example, if they are in education, they may be allowed to design their own bilingual education program, implement it and account for its success or failure. Since these programs are likely to be a one-person program, the success rate is problematic. However, since no one else professes to know anything about this area, or care to be involved, the person has virtual freedom to do whatever with it.

There is another aspect to these liberating forces. Since the person is in the institution by virtue of the ascribed characteristics, she is not held accountable to all of the other institutional requirements on a continuing basis. More importantly, the overall institutional perception is that she is the exception and not expected to comply to the regular institutional processes.

In general, the results are that these liberating characteristics justify practices which create restrain. For example, being that these women are the only ones of their kind, they are nominated and assigned to num committees on campus which require women and minorities. They are called upon to serve on "advise and consult" panels which deal with the areas their ascribed role dictates, such as bilingual education and Chicano studies. They are expected to attend functions which call for these specializations. They are also expected to respond to all questions and queries regarding these specializations. All of these activities fall under the services portion of a professor's evaluation requirements. These women hold impressive records.

As these women engage in the above activities, research and teaching are compromised. The greatest compromise is in the research area. What normally

occurs is that these women do not publish the requisite articles and are denied tenure. That is the end of their academic career.

Support Services

Most Hispanic-American women are employed in the support services. Most of them hold clerical positions. A few hold middle management positions such as directors of affirmative action or deans of student affairs. There are two types of women who hold the clerical positions. One group is older and have risen through the clerical ranks, so that now they occupy administrative assistant positions in the units such as physical sciences, medical school or engineering college. These women are hesitant to identify themselves as Hispanic-Americans. They are also likely to disclaim any credit for their advancement to their ethnicity. Most importantly, their reference group is the professorial one. They volunteer and enjoy attending professorial activities. They write about professorial and academic events and they avoid attending too many all secretaries' functions. For example, one woman writes,

> If I have a choice about going alone to an Academic Senate's Committee meeting or a secretaries' informational meeting, I will go to the professors' meeting. They're more interesting and worthwhile.

These women tend to be the most satisfied of all Hispanic-American women employed in the academic system. They write about their opportunities to advance as a particular professor advanced from professor to dean. They relate how they followed the professor across the campus. This group of women also see the hierarchy as a liberating force which propelled them

along with their male superior to bigger and better posts. They also indicate how their work experiences have been expanded and enhanced as they progressed. In a very real sense, the bureaucratic nature of the organization has benefited these women as they have advanced through the organization.

The second group of clerical workers is made up of younger, more highly educated women who see themselves advancing to administrative posts. These women are restless, unhappy and confused about the way the organization "works." They are likely to join "the union for protection."

A sub-group of this group has given up the struggle for climbing or changing their positions. They just express some hope their services will continue to be required. Those who are still aspiring, continue to take additional training in interpersonal and technical skills. These women, too, attribute their low status to their ethnicity. More revealing, they are also aware that their advancement opportunities will always be conditioned by their ethnicity. The non-aspirers prefer not to present any explanations. They simply state, "It's no use. I either fight and not sleep at night for a stab at a promotion, or I just show up to work. It is easier for me to just work."

Those women who are holding administrative posts are those who have acquired the positions during the early and mid 70's. They have either retained the same job or they have advanced slightly. Most of them are in the same position. They may have moved their offices and modified their titles, and received pay increases, but their responsibilities and authority have remained the same. All of these women describe the nature of their work as that in which

> nobody bothers you until the yearly report time comes around. Essentially, you make your own job.

They elaborate

> If I could only feel that I make a difference here. If I only knew that there are some precise expectations. If I could only figure out what to do in order to advance <u>out</u> of this job.

Most of these women express real ambivalence about the position they hold. They also appear to be the most defenseless. They have high aspirations, they are willing to do whatever is required to better their condition, but they don't know what it is they <u>should</u> do. For example, one woman writes

> I've been here for five years. The program has been successful in that I haven't had complaints from my superiors. The people are nice. I have routine requests filled promptly and I have been nominated to represent these services in several committees. However, I have never been nominated for a promotion, travel requests and office changes were turned down and many times I feel no one knows I'm here until some record from my office is necessary. I have applied for upgrading positions, but I have never been called for an interview. I just don't know what to do to advance <u>out</u> of this office.

These women are also likely to be quite active in Hispanic-American organizations on campus and the community. They usually assume leadership roles and may on occasion be asked to speak to groups or organize workshops for other Hispanic-American women. In general, this is an educated, sophisticated group of women whose skills are not fully employed in their present positions. The opportunity to participate in other organizations is

avidly sought. Due to the "unstructured" characteristic of their regular work, many are able to avail themselves, particularly if their participation is in a local event. They are restrained from this sort of activity if they seek approval from their superiors. This activity is normally not considered legitimate within the bureaucracy.

Conclusions

It has been shown how Hispanic-American women participate in academic organizations. A few participate in the academic ranks. They occupy the lower levels in those units considered most appropriate to their personal attributes. They are also not likely to remain long in academia due to their failure to attain tenure. The primary reason for this failure is that these women are expected to participate in those activities which require their personal attributes and they are thereby, unable to fulfill the normal academic requirements in research and teaching.

The result of this sort of organizational participation is that these persons are denied the requisite socialization processes for success in academia.

The second group of Hispanic-American women are in the support services. One group of the clerical services advances with the professors through the ranks. These women discount their ethnicity and identify primarily with the professors. Their male superiors provide experiences which contribute to their satisfaction in their work. The second group is made up of younger women who have a keen awareness of their ethnicity and the problems associated with advancement in the organization. They are, nevertheless, ambitious aspiring to administrative positions outside the clerical services. They

continue to upgrade their skills and they may join the union. A sub-group of this one may just give up and grant primacy to other personal activities outside the institution.

Those women who are in administrative posts in the support services are young and ambitious. They obtained their work during the early and mid 70's. Most are still holding the same job with a few changes except in responsibility and authority. These jobs are also the ones most likely to be discontinued with the increasing economic restraints. These women are bright and sophisticated with flexible schedules and unstructured procedures, rules and regulations. They are active on campus committees which require their personal attributes. They are denied opportunities to exercise leadership or authority. They, therefore, assume these roles in organizations outside academia. Their ethnicity assumes primacy. These women are likely to become political figures in their communities. This possibility increases when their institution's services are no longer desired.

Hispanic-American women are, then, permitted to participate in academia without strict bureaucratic constraints. However, it is the bureaucratic characteristics which ultimately condition the processes which would socialize and integrate them into the organization. But instead, they participate on the periphery without real impact on the organization and without undergoing personal changes. This practice is justified because the organization grants primacy to their personal attributes rather than their training and competence.